



Apollo Grach practices techniques at the start of class. "I've had an interest in sword fighting for years so I thought this would be the perfect class to take," said Grach.

The Knights of West Commons

Class teaches ins and outs of long sword

Most classes don't require text books translated directly from 15th century writings and double edged wooden swords, called 'waisters', but this isn't your average class.

The class is 'Sword Play-Medieval Long Swords.'

Every Monday a group of students meet in the M Building West Commons from 7 to 8:20 pm to learn the fundamentals of the medieval long sword.

It's been offered at the college since 2001 when it was first introduced by the Chicago Swordplay Guild, a school that, according to their website, "provides organized instruction in the serious study and practice of historical European swordplay."

The class is offered every semester and, although there is only one course, it is a different curriculum the second time through.

"It's a 12 week class in the fall and spring and a 10 week class in the summer," said instructor Jesse Kullo. "We have 24 weeks worth of curriculum though."

While most of the students have had previous martial art experience they said it was rare to see a class on western martial arts.

"You see a lot of eastern martial arts but not many western martial art classes," said Matt Clement. "I've been studying Japanese sword for about seven years and thought this would be a good chance to branch out."

Within the CSG there are different ranks people can reach.

"There is novice, scholar, free scholar and provosts," said Kullo.

It takes years for someone to rise from novice to free scholar.

"It's not like you can ask to try out to be a scholar, it has to be offered to you," said Kullo, who is a scholar.

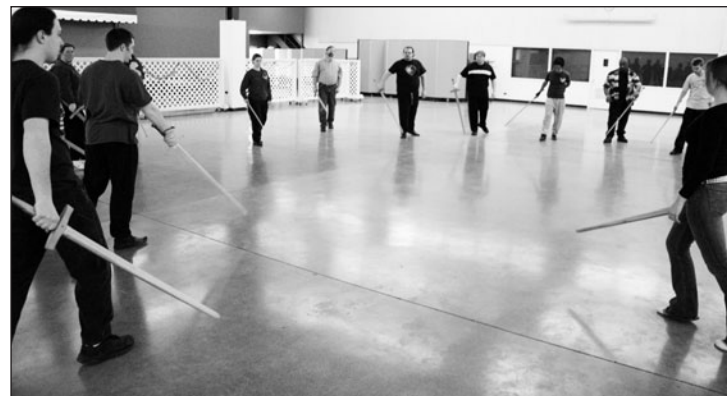
Whether wanting to rise through the ranks of the SCG, learn the ins and outs of the long sword or just simply for exercise, students take the class for a variety of reasons.

"We first came here because we figured who better to offer this class to than college kids and it's been a fun ride ever since," said Kullo.

For information on the Chicago Swordplay Guild visit www.chicagoswordplayguild.com. For information on the class visit www.cod.edu.



The wooden swords that students use in class are called waisters because, according to instructor Kullo, that's exactly what they are.



The group performs a formal technique to signal the end of class for the day.

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